

Circle of Safety

Deep Dive Modules · Team Building

CONTENTS

- Part 1 · Overview
- Part 2 · What Is the Circle of Safety? Understanding the Foundation
- Part 3 · Why Treatment Teams Break Down: The Anatomy of an Unsafe Circle
- Part 4 · The Brain Science: How Safety Changes Everything About Clinical Work
- Part 5 · Building the Circle: From Theory to Daily Practice
- Part 6 · Circle of Safety Self-Assessment
- Part 7 · Exercise 1: Trust Audit & Account Balance
- Part 8 · Exercise 2: Vulnerability Courage Mapping
- Part 9 · Exercise 3: Empathy Mirror — Colleague Compassion Inventory
- Part 10 · Exercise 4: Communication Safety Lab
- Part 11 · Exercise 5: Protective Response Scenarios
- Part 12 · Exercise 6: Belonging & Acceptance Deep Dive
- Part 13 · Exercise 7: Conflict Resolution & Repair Blueprint
- Part 14 · Exercise 8: Daily Safety Check-In (7 Days)
- Part 15 · Exercise 9: Team Safety Toolkit Builder
- Part 16 · Exercise 10: Safety–Clinical Effectiveness Connection Map

Part 1 · Overview

Circle of Safety

Building Psychological Safety in Treatment Teams

Reading Sections

Why Treatment Teams Break Down: The Anatomy of an Unsafe Circle

The Brain Science: How Safety Changes Everything About Clinical Work

Self-Assessment

Worksheets & Exercises

Part 2 • What Is the Circle of Safety?

Understanding the Foundation

What Is the Circle of Safety? Understanding the Foundation

The Circle of Safety is not a policy, a mission statement, or a set of rules posted on a breakroom wall. It is a lived, felt experience — the tangible sense that you are surrounded by people who have your back, who will protect you from external threats, and who will not become the threat themselves.

When the Circle of Safety is strong, team members can direct all of their energy outward — toward the mission, the clients, the work that matters. When the circle is broken, team members must redirect that energy inward — toward self-protection, political maneuvering, and emotional survival within their own team.

For substance use disorder clinicians and treatment center staff, the Circle of Safety is not a luxury — it is a clinical necessity. The work of addiction treatment is inherently destabilizing. You sit with human suffering every day. You absorb stories of trauma, relapse, family destruction, and death. You hold space for people in their most vulnerable moments while managing your own emotional responses. You make decisions under pressure that can affect whether someone lives or dies.

This work cannot be sustained — and cannot be done well — without a team environment that feels fundamentally safe. Yet in many treatment organizations, the Circle of Safety is exactly what's missing. Staff members compete rather than collaborate. Clinical disagreements become personal conflicts. Leadership manages through fear, micromanagement, or neglect rather than through trust and empowerment.

The Circle of Safety operates on a simple but profound principle: when people feel safe with each other, extraordinary things become possible. Creativity flourishes because people aren't afraid to suggest unconventional approaches. Innovation happens because mistakes are treated as learning opportunities rather than career threats. Retention improves because people don't leave teams where they feel valued, protected, and genuinely cared for.

This intensive is designed to help you examine, build, and strengthen the Circle of Safety within your treatment team — not as an abstract concept, but as a practical, daily practice that transforms how you work, how you relate to colleagues, and ultimately, how you serve the people who have entrusted you with their recovery.

Reflection Questions

1. When you think about your current team environment, do you feel a genuine Circle of Safety — that your colleagues truly have your back? What evidence supports your answer?

2. How much of your professional energy goes toward the mission (serving clients) versus self-protection (navigating internal politics, guarding against criticism, managing impressions)?

3. Can you identify a specific time when the absence of safety within your team directly affected your clinical work or your ability to be present with clients?

4. If you could change one thing about the safety climate within your team tomorrow, what would it be?

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how safe do you feel being authentically yourself at work — including admitting struggles, asking for help, and showing vulnerability?

Part 3 · Why Treatment Teams Break Down: The Anatomy of an Unsafe Circle

Why Treatment Teams Break Down: The Anatomy of an Unsafe Circle

Treatment teams don't become unsafe overnight. The erosion happens gradually — through small, accumulating betrayals of trust, unaddressed conflicts, leadership failures, and systemic pressures that pit colleagues against each other rather than uniting them around shared purpose.

The first fracture usually occurs around trust. Trust in treatment teams is uniquely fragile because the work itself is emotionally loaded. When a clinician shares a clinical struggle and that vulnerability is met with judgment, used against them in supervision, or shared as gossip among colleagues, the trust violation is not just personal — it is existential. The clinician learns that honesty is dangerous, and the entire team loses access to the authentic clinical dialogue that is essential for quality care.

The second fracture occurs around blame culture. In organizations where mistakes are punished rather than explored, team members develop elaborate defense mechanisms: passing responsibility, covering tracks, avoiding difficult cases, and never admitting uncertainty. When the organizational culture punishes mistakes, clinicians stop taking the clinical risks necessary for breakthrough moments with clients.

The third fracture involves the empathy gap — the disconnect between the compassion clinicians are expected to show clients and the compassion they receive from their own teams and leadership. Clinicians who spend all day holding space for others' pain while receiving no holding themselves eventually develop compassion fatigue not just from client work, but from the absence of care within their professional environment.

The fourth fracture is around communication. In unsafe treatment teams, communication becomes strategic rather than authentic. People say what they think leadership wants to hear rather than what they actually believe. Clinical disagreements are avoided because they might create conflict. The most important clinical conversations — the ones about what's really happening with clients and what's really happening with staff — never occur.

The fifth and perhaps most insidious fracture is the normalization of isolation. In many treatment settings, clinicians work in emotional silos. They carry their hardest cases alone. They process their most difficult feelings in the car on the drive home. They don't ask for help because asking for help has been coded as weakness. And they leave — not because they don't care about the work, but because the unsafety of the environment has made the work unsustainable.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the five fractures — trust violations, blame culture, empathy gap, strategic communication, or normalized isolation — is most present in your current work environment?

2. Have you ever shared a clinical struggle with colleagues and had that vulnerability used against you?

3. How does your organization handle clinical mistakes? Is the response exploratory and supportive, or punitive and blaming?

4. When was the last time you felt genuinely cared for by your team — not just as a clinician, but as a human being?

5. If you are working in emotional isolation, what is the cost of that isolation? To you personally? To your clients?

Part 4 · The Brain Science: How Safety Changes Everything About Clinical Work

The Brain Science: How Safety Changes Everything About Clinical Work

The neuroscience of psychological safety provides a compelling biological foundation for why the Circle of Safety is not optional in treatment environments — it is neurologically necessary for both staff wellbeing and clinical effectiveness.

When a person perceives their environment as safe, the prefrontal cortex — the brain's executive center responsible for complex reasoning, empathy, creativity, and emotional regulation — operates at full capacity. This is the brain state required for the sophisticated clinical work of addiction treatment: reading client affect, formulating therapeutic responses, holding multiple perspectives simultaneously, tolerating ambiguity, and maintaining emotional presence during difficult moments.

When a person perceives threat — and an unsafe team environment is a perpetual source of social threat — the brain shifts resources from the prefrontal cortex to the amygdala and limbic system. This is the fight-flight-freeze response, and while it is brilliantly designed for survival, it is catastrophic for clinical work. In threat mode, empathy decreases. Cognitive flexibility narrows. Creative problem-solving disappears.

Dr. Amy Edmondson's research on psychological safety in teams has demonstrated that psychologically safe teams consistently outperform unsafe ones — not because the individuals are more talented, but because the brain state enabled by safety allows full access to existing capabilities. In treatment settings, this means that the same clinician, with the same training and the same clients, will produce meaningfully different clinical outcomes depending on whether their team environment feels safe or threatening.

The neurochemistry of safety is equally relevant. In safe environments, the brain produces oxytocin — the neurochemical of trust and bonding — which enhances social connection, increases empathy, and supports collaborative problem-solving. In unsafe environments, the brain produces elevated cortisol — the stress hormone — which, when chronically elevated, impairs memory, reduces empathy, increases irritability, and contributes to the burnout cascade.

For treatment professionals specifically, there is an additional neurological consideration: the phenomenon of vicarious traumatization. Clinicians who work with traumatized populations absorb the neurological impact of their clients' experiences. A strong Circle of Safety provides the neurological counterweight to this exposure: the oxytocin, social connection, and sense of protection that help the brain process and release vicarious trauma rather than accumulating it.

Reflection Questions

1. When you are at work, what percentage of the time is your brain operating from the prefrontal cortex (creative, empathetic, flexible) versus the amygdala (defensive, reactive, self-protective)?

2. Have you noticed a connection between feeling unsafe at work and a decrease in your clinical effectiveness?

3. How does understanding the neuroscience of safety change how you think about team dynamics?

4. If chronic cortisol elevation from an unsafe work environment mimics the same stress patterns you treat in clients, what does that tell you about the urgency of addressing team safety?

5. What specific practices could serve as the neurological counterweight to vicarious traumatization?

Part 5 • Building the Circle: From Theory to Daily Practice

Building the Circle: From Theory to Daily Practice

Building a Circle of Safety within a treatment team is not a single event — it is not a team-building retreat, a motivational speech, or a new policy. It is a daily practice, built through thousands of small choices that either reinforce or erode the sense that "we are in this together, and we will protect each other."

Trust is built in micro-moments. Every interaction with a colleague is an opportunity to deposit into or withdraw from the trust account. Showing up on time for a shift change. Following through on a commitment to cover a group. Keeping a confidence that was shared in vulnerability. Acknowledging a colleague's contribution in a team meeting rather than taking credit. These are not dramatic acts — they are the small, consistent behaviors that, accumulated over time, create the felt experience of trustworthiness.

Vulnerability is the catalyst. Nothing accelerates Circle of Safety development more than appropriate vulnerability from those in positions of influence. When a clinical supervisor admits they don't have the answer. When a senior clinician shares that a case is affecting them emotionally. When a director acknowledges that a decision they made didn't work out. These moments of honest vulnerability give implicit permission for everyone else to be human.

Empathy must be bidirectional. Treatment teams are skilled at empathizing with clients — it is the core of the work. But many teams struggle to extend that same empathy to colleagues. The clinician who is clearly overwhelmed needs the same quality of attention as the client who is clearly struggling. The colleague who snaps in a team meeting deserves the same curiosity about "what's underneath that reaction" as the client who acts out in group.

Protective response is the ultimate expression. The Circle of Safety is most powerfully felt in moments of threat — when a colleague makes a mistake, when a client files a complaint, when organizational pressure increases, when someone is struggling personally. In these moments, the team either closes ranks around the vulnerable member or exposes them. The choice to protect — to step in, to advocate, to absorb some of the pressure, to say "we'll figure this out together" — is the choice that defines whether the circle is real or merely aspirational.

Sustainability requires self-care integration. The Circle of Safety cannot be maintained by people who are depleted. Creating and sustaining safety for others requires maintaining personal resilience — and this means that self-care is not selfish but essential. A team that encourages members to take time off, set boundaries, seek their own support, and acknowledge their own needs is a team that can sustain safety over the long haul.

The goal is not perfection. No team maintains a perfect Circle of Safety at all times. Conflicts arise. Trust gets damaged. Communication breaks down. The measure of a healthy team is not the absence of these ruptures but the speed and skill with which they are repaired.

Reflection Questions

1. Think about the "micro-moments" of trust in your daily work. What are three specific small actions you could take this week to make deposits into the trust account with your colleagues?

2. When was the last time you witnessed or practiced appropriate vulnerability at work? What was the impact on the team?

3. How skilled is your team at empathizing with each other — not just clients?

4. Describe a time when your team either protected or exposed a vulnerable member. What happened, and how did it affect the team's sense of safety?

5. Write a personal commitment statement for your role in building the Circle of Safety.

Part 6 · Circle of Safety Self-Assessment

Circle of Safety Self-Assessment

Rate each statement: 1 (Not at all like me) to 5 (Very much like me)

I feel genuinely trusted by my colleagues rather than suspected or doubted

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I consistently follow through on commitments and promises to team members

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I demonstrate reliability through consistent supportive behavior toward colleagues

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

When trust has been damaged, I take initiative to repair it rather than avoiding the issue

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I can identify specific behaviors that build versus undermine trust within my team

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I feel confident that my colleagues believe in my commitment to team welfare

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I recognize when my own actions may be undermining trust without my awareness

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I actively work to inspire confidence in my professional character and reliability

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I feel comfortable showing appropriate vulnerability with my colleagues

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I can admit mistakes, uncertainties, and limitations without excessive fear of judgment

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I practice authentic self-expression while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I model vulnerability in ways that encourage rather than discourage colleague openness

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I recognize the difference between professional vulnerability and oversharing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I feel safe enough with my team to ask for help when I need it

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I share my genuine professional concerns rather than presenting a "perfect" facade

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I have been punished or judged for showing vulnerability at work in the past

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I feel genuinely accepted and valued within my team rather than merely tolerated

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

My sense of belonging positively affects my motivation, creativity, and engagement

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I experience deep acceptance rather than surface-level inclusion from colleagues

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I can identify specific behaviors that create versus undermine my sense of belonging

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I feel that my unique contributions are recognized and valued by team members

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I experience belonging that goes beyond just "fitting in" to genuinely being wanted

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

My unmet belonging needs at work affect my professional satisfaction and performance

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I actively work to help new or marginalized colleagues feel they belong

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

My colleagues demonstrate genuine empathy rather than superficial or absent compassion

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

Empathetic responses from team members encourage me to share struggles and concerns

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I actively cultivate compassion for colleagues facing professional challenges

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I can offer comfort and understanding during difficult professional situations

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I validate rather than dismiss colleague experiences and concerns

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I demonstrate genuine care for colleague wellbeing beyond professional performance

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I recognize when my responses to colleague struggles are unsympathetic or dismissive

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

The empathy climate on my team supports rather than undermines individual resilience

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

Communication within my team feels safe, constructive, and non-threatening

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I can provide feedback that feels supportive rather than critical or punitive

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

Open communication on my team enhances rather than diminishes effectiveness

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I listen actively and respond empathetically during difficult conversations

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I speak in ways that build up rather than tear down colleague confidence

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I recognize communication patterns that damage professional relationships

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I encourage rather than discourage colleague sharing and vulnerability through my communication

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I address communication breakdowns promptly rather than letting them fester

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I actively protect colleagues from unnecessary harm, criticism, or professional danger

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I defend team members when they face unfair treatment or excessive pressure

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I advocate for colleague needs and welfare within organizational systems

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I shield rather than expose colleagues during their most vulnerable moments

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I stand up for team members even when it may be personally costly

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I use my influence to create rather than threaten psychological safety

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I model protective behaviors rather than merely talking about them

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

I challenge organizational practices that undermine team member welfare

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

Scoring guide

Reset all progress? This cannot be undone.

Part 7 · Exercise 1: Trust Audit & Account Balance

Trust Audit & Account Balance

What You Have Deposited, and What You Have Withdrawn

Why This Matters

Trust is built in micro-moments — the covered shift, the message answered, the concern raised privately instead of publicly. Every interaction with a colleague is a deposit or a withdrawal, and most are too small to notice at the time. This audit makes the ledger visible. Answer as the account holder, not as the person defending the account.

1. How consistently do you follow through on what you tell colleagues you will do?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. Name three specific deposits you have made in the last two weeks. Not intentions — actions your colleagues would recognise.

Be specific and honest...

3. Which colleague receives most of your deposits? What is it about that relationship that makes depositing easy?

Be specific and honest...

1. Name a withdrawal you have made — a commitment missed, a confidence shared, a colleague criticised to someone else. Be specific, and resist the urge to explain it away.

Be specific and honest...

2. What was happening for you at the time? Caseload, exhaustion, your own unsafety?
Understanding the cause is not the same as excusing the effect.

Be specific and honest...

3. How aware were you, at the time, that this registered as a withdrawal for the other person?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

Pick three colleagues you work with regularly — ideally one you trust easily, one that is neutral, and one where the account feels overdrawn.

1. Colleague 1 — who they are to you, and what you believe the balance is from their side. What would they say about your reliability?

Be specific and honest...

2. Colleague 2 — same question. Where does your account with them actually stand?

Be specific and honest...

3. Colleague 3, the overdrawn one — what happened, and what has kept you from addressing it?

Be specific and honest...

1. What is one deposit you will make this week into the overdrawn account? Name the action, the person, and the day.

Be specific and honest...

2. What will you stop doing? Withdrawals have to end before deposits start counting.

Be specific and honest...

Part 8 · Exercise 2: Vulnerability Courage Mapping

Vulnerability Courage Mapping

What You Hide, What It Costs, and Where to Start

Why This Matters

In treatment work, the things clinicians hide are rarely shameful — uncertainty about a case, a client who frightens them, a countertransference reaction, exhaustion. Concealment costs energy that was meant for clients, and it teaches everyone watching that this is not a team where you can be uncertain out loud. This exercise maps what you conceal and finds the smallest honest step out.

1. What clinical uncertainty are you currently carrying that no colleague knows about? A case you are unsure of, an approach that is not working, a decision you keep second-guessing.

Be specific and honest...

2. What personal or emotional reality about this work are you concealing? Depletion, dread about a particular client, a story that got through your defences.

Be specific and honest...

3. What would you never admit in a staffing? What does the fact that it is unsayable tell you about your team?

Be specific and honest...

1. How much of your daily energy goes into managing how you are perceived at work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. What has hiding cost your clinical work? Be concrete — a consultation not sought, a supervision hour spent performing competence rather than getting help.

Be specific and honest...

3. Who on your team is probably hiding the same thing you are, and what does it cost the team that neither of you knows?

Be specific and honest...

Vulnerability is graduated, not binary. Build a ladder from the smallest honest disclosure to the one that feels genuinely risky.

1. Rung 1 — the disclosure that would cost you almost nothing. ("I have not worked with this population before.")

Be specific and honest...

2. Rung 2 — mildly uncomfortable but survivable. ("I am not sure my approach with this client is working.")

Be specific and honest...

3. Rung 3 — genuinely exposing. What is it, and who would need to be in the room for it to be safe?

Be specific and honest...

1. Which rung will you actually climb this month? Name the person, the setting, and roughly what you will say.

Be specific and honest...

2. What is the realistic worst outcome, and could you survive it? Separate the real risk from the imagined one.

Be specific and honest...

Part 9 · Exercise 3: Empathy Mirror — Colleague Compassion Inventory

Empathy Mirror

Colleague Compassion Inventory

The Empathy Gap

Most treatment teams extend extraordinary compassion to clients and almost none to each other. The same clinician who will sit patiently with a client's eighth relapse will privately write off a colleague who missed a deadline twice. This exercise turns the clinical skill you already have back toward the people you work beside.

1. How much benefit of the doubt do you extend to a struggling client?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. How much benefit of the doubt do you extend to a struggling colleague?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

3. If those two numbers differ, why? What makes a colleague's struggle less deserving of curiosity than a client's?

Be specific and honest...

Hold one person in mind for this whole section. You do not have to name them in writing.

1. What is the story you tell yourself about why they behave the way they do?

Be specific and honest...

2. Now apply a clinical formulation instead of a character judgement. What pressure, history, fear or unmet need could be driving the behaviour you find difficult?

Be specific and honest...

3. What do you actually not know about their life? List what you are currently filling in with assumption.

Be specific and honest...

1. Pick one colleague. What are they carrying at work that nobody thanks them for?

Be specific and honest...

2. What are you carrying that nobody sees? What would it take for someone to notice?

Be specific and honest...

1. What is one specific act of empathy you will offer a colleague this week? Not a compliment — an act. Covering something, asking a real question, sitting with them after a hard session.

Be specific and honest...

2. Who is hardest for you to do this for, and what would need to shift in you to do it anyway?

Be specific and honest...

Part 10 · Exercise 4: Communication Safety Lab

Communication Safety Lab

From Strategic Speech to Straight Talk

Strategic Communication Is a Symptom

When people calculate what is safe to say before they say it, the team has already lost information it needed. In treatment settings the withheld sentence is often clinically significant — a concern about a discharge plan, a doubt about a medication, an observation about a colleague's capacity. This lab surfaces what you are editing out and rewrites it into something you could actually say on Monday.

1. How often do you edit what you are about to say in a staffing based on who is in the room?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. With whom are you most careful? What are you protecting — your standing, your workload, someone else's feelings, your job?

Be specific and honest...

3. Where in your week does the most honest conversation happen? What makes that setting different?

Be specific and honest...

1. What is one thing you have not said about a current client that someone on the team should know?

Be specific and honest...

2. What is one thing you have not said about how the team functions?

Be specific and honest...

3. What would have to be true about your team for you to say both of those out loud?

Be specific and honest...

Take the two unsaid things above. Rewrite each as something you could plausibly say this week — specific, non-accusatory, and about the work rather than the person.

1. Rewrite 1, the clinical concern. Write the actual sentence you would say.

Be specific and honest...

2. Rewrite 2, the team concern. Write the actual sentence.

Be specific and honest...

3. Who is the safest person to say it to first, and when will you say it?

Be specific and honest...

1. What is one communication agreement you would propose to your team? (For example: disagreements about a case get raised in the staffing, not in the parking lot.)

Be specific and honest...

2. What would you personally commit to, regardless of whether the team adopts anything?

Be specific and honest...

Part 11 · Exercise 5: Protective Response Scenarios

Protective Response Scenarios

What You Would Actually Do

The Circle Is Defined at the Moment of Threat

A team's safety is not measured on good days. It is measured in the seconds after someone is exposed — when a colleague is blamed, humiliated, or left alone with something they should not be carrying alone. These five scenarios come from ordinary treatment settings. Write what you would actually do, not what you would like to believe you would do.

A client dies after leaving treatment. In the review, a supervisor says the counsellor "should have seen it coming." The room goes quiet. The counsellor is sitting right there.

1. What do you say in that room? Write the words.

Be specific and honest...

2. If you would say nothing, what stops you — and what does your silence cost that counsellor?

Be specific and honest...

A new clinician suggests an unconventional approach in a staffing. A senior colleague responds with a joke at their expense. The room laughs.

1. What do you do in the moment?

Be specific and honest...

2. What do you do afterwards — with the new hire, and with the senior colleague?

Be specific and honest...

A colleague admitted in supervision that a case was overwhelming them. Weeks later you hear it repeated in a hallway as evidence they "cannot handle the caseload."

1. What do you do about the person repeating it?

Be specific and honest...

2. What does this incident teach everyone who hears about it? What would repair look like at the team level, not just the individual one?

Be specific and honest...

Leadership asks the team to backdate progress notes ahead of an audit. It is framed as a formality. Everyone is tired.

1. What is your response, and to whom?

Be specific and honest...

2. Who on your team is most at risk if this goes wrong, and how does protecting them change what you do?

Be specific and honest...

A colleague you respect is visibly deteriorating — short with clients, missing documentation, isolating at lunch. Nobody has said anything.

1. What do you say to them, and where? Write the opening line.

Be specific and honest...

2. What would you want a colleague to say to you if the positions were reversed? Does your answer above match it?

Be specific and honest...

1. Across those five scenarios, how likely are you to speak up in the moment rather than afterwards?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. Where did you hesitate most, and what does that tell you about the conditions you need in order to protect someone?

Be specific and honest...

Part 12 · Exercise 6: Belonging & Acceptance Deep Dive

Belonging & Acceptance Deep Dive

Who Is Inside the Circle, and Who Is on Its Edge

Belonging Is Not the Same as Being Included

A person can be invited to every meeting and still not belong. Belonging is the difference between being tolerated for what you produce and being wanted for who you are. In treatment teams, the people on the edge of the circle are often carrying the most — night staff, techs, the person in recovery who has not disclosed, the newest hire.

1. How much of yourself can you bring to work without editing?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. In which settings at work do you genuinely belong, and in which are you performing a role? What is different about them?

Be specific and honest...

3. What part of who you are do you leave at the door? What would change if you did not have to?

Be specific and honest...

1. Who on your team is closest to the edge of the circle? How do you know?

Be specific and honest...

2. What role, shift or background tends to sit outside the circle in your organisation? Whose contribution goes unnamed?

Be specific and honest...

3. Have you ever been the person on the edge? What did it feel like, and what would have helped?

Be specific and honest...

1. What unwritten rules decide who is "one of us" on your team? Tenure, credentials, personal recovery, who you eat lunch with, how much you complain?

Be specific and honest...

2. Which of those rules do you enforce, even passively?

Be specific and honest...

1. What is one specific thing you will do this week to move someone from the edge toward the centre? Name the person and the action.

Be specific and honest...

2. What would you need to give up — status, comfort, an in-joke — for that to be real rather than performative?

Be specific and honest...

Part 13 · Exercise 7: Conflict Resolution & Repair Blueprint

Conflict Resolution & Repair Blueprint

The Rupture You Have Not Repaired

Teams Are Not Broken by Conflict — They Are Broken by Unrepaired Conflict

Every functioning team has ruptures. What separates a safe team from an unsafe one is whether rupture is followed by repair. Unrepaired conflict does not stay still; it hardens into avoidance, then into a story about a person, then into a permanent fault line the whole team works around. This blueprint takes one rupture and builds the repair.

1. Describe one conflict at work that was never properly resolved. What actually happened — the events, not the interpretation?

Be specific and honest...

2. How long ago was it, and how does it still shape how you work with that person?

Be specific and honest...

3. What is the story you now tell about them? What would they say is missing from it?

Be specific and honest...

1. When conflict appears, how directly do you address it?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. What is your default — avoid, accommodate, go around the person to a supervisor, escalate, or address it directly? Where did you learn it?

Be specific and honest...

3. What does your default cost your team when you use it?

Be specific and honest...

Write the actual conversation. Repair fails when it stays abstract.

1. Your opening sentence. It should name the rupture without assigning blame.

Be specific and honest...

2. What you will own — your part, without conditions attached to theirs.

Be specific and honest...

3. What you will ask for, and what you want the working relationship to look like afterwards.

Be specific and honest...

1. When and where will you have this conversation? A date you write down is different from an intention.

Be specific and honest...

2. If they do not respond well, what will you do? The repair you control is your part only.

Be specific and honest...

Part 14 · Exercise 8: Daily Safety Check-In (7 Days)

Daily Safety Check-In

7 Days of Watching the Circle in Real Time

The Practice

An annual engagement survey tells you almost nothing about a Wednesday. Safety is a daily physiological state, and it moves. For seven days, take five minutes to record where you actually were — not where you would like to have been. The pattern that emerges across a week is more honest than any single reflection.

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

Mostly prefrontal today (open, curious, flexible) or mostly amygdala (guarded, reactive, self-protective)? What tipped it?

Your response...

One deposit you made into a colleague's trust account today.

Your response...

One moment you felt unsafe, or saw someone else become unsafe.

Your response...

Roughly what share of today's energy went to the mission versus self-protection?

Your response...

Safety rating today (1 = fully defended, 10 = fully in the circle)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Defended · In the circle

1. Which day was safest, and what was different about it? Safety usually has a cause you can name.

Review your week...

2. What consistently pushed you into a defended state — a person, a meeting, a time of day, a type of case?

Review your week...

3. Across seven days, how many deposits did you actually make? What does that number tell you?

Review your week...

4. How did your energy split between the mission and self-protection? What would you reclaim if that split shifted?

Review your week...

5. What is the one change to your week that would raise your baseline? Name it as an action, and start it next week.

Review your week...

Part 15 · Exercise 9: Team Safety Toolkit Builder

Team Safety Toolkit Builder

Practices Your Team Could Actually Adopt

Culture Is Made of Practices, Not Values

A value on a wall changes nothing. A practice that happens every Tuesday changes a team. Select the practices that would work in your setting, add your own, then pick the one you will actually propose. Small enough to survive a bad week, specific enough that someone else could run it without you.

How will your team start a shift or staffing in a way that registers people as human beings before it registers them as roles?

Write this practice in your own words — as if you were handing it to someone else to run:

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

What happens on your team the moment someone makes a clinical error? Write the protocol you want, not the one you have.

Write this practice in your own words — as if you were handing it to someone else to run:

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Questions a colleague could ask you that would actually get a real answer. Not "how are you."

Write this practice in your own words — as if you were handing it to someone else to run:

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Sentences you can say in a room when a colleague is being exposed. Short enough to use under pressure.

Write this practice in your own words — as if you were handing it to someone else to run:
Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

How does your team return to each other after conflict? What would make repair normal rather than exceptional?

Write this practice in your own words — as if you were handing it to someone else to run:
Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

When safety breaks down and the team cannot fix it internally, where does it go, and who is accountable?

Write this practice in your own words — as if you were handing it to someone else to run:
Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

1. Which practice will you bring to your team first, and to whom will you bring it?
Make this concrete...

2. What will you do yourself, starting this week, whether or not anyone else joins you?
Make this concrete...

3. Who will hold you to it — the person you will tell about this toolkit and who will check in with you?

Make this concrete...

4. Write your commitment statement for your role in building the Circle of Safety. One paragraph, in your own words.

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Describe the practice, who runs it, and when it happens...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Make this concrete...

Part 16 · Exercise 10: Safety-Clinical Effectiveness Connection Map

Safety-Clinical Effectiveness Connection Map

Tracing Team Safety Through to Client Outcomes

Safety Is a Clinical Variable

A defended brain is a worse clinical instrument. When staff operate from threat, the prefrontal capacities this work depends on — pattern recognition, empathy, flexible thinking under pressure — narrow measurably, while the amygdala takes over. That makes team safety upstream of clinical quality, not a wellbeing perk sitting beside it. This map makes the link specific enough to say out loud to leadership.

1. Think of a client whose care was affected — well or badly — by how the team was functioning. What happened for the client?

Be specific and honest...

2. Trace it backwards. What team condition made that outcome more likely? A consultation not sought, information withheld, a handoff nobody wanted to make?

Be specific and honest...

3. What would have had to be true about the team for that case to have gone differently?

Be specific and honest...

1. On a safe day, how present and clinically flexible are you with clients?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

2. On a day when you feel unsafe with your team, how present and flexible are you?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Not at all · Very much

3. Describe the difference in concrete clinical terms. What do you actually stop doing with clients when you are defended?

Be specific and honest...

1. What has your team lost to unsafety in the past year — people who left, consultations not sought, ideas not raised, errors not surfaced?

Be specific and honest...

2. Who left, and what did their leaving cost in caseload, continuity and morale?

Be specific and honest...

Leadership rarely funds "psychological safety." It funds retention, outcomes and risk. Translate.

1. Write three sentences you could say to leadership connecting team safety to something they already measure.

Be specific and honest...

2. What is the smallest change you would ask for first — the one most likely to be said yes to?

Be specific and honest...

1. If the circle held, what would be different in a year — for you, for the team, for the clients?

Be specific and honest...

2. What is your part in getting there, stated as a commitment rather than a hope?

Be specific and honest...
